

Victory over the devil, the Five R's: Reclaim

Fourth Sunday of Easter,

May 3, 2009

We're continuing in our series today, "Victory over the devil, the five R's" with a look at our next "R" word, Reclaim. Before we get to that, though, let's take a moment to review.

Our first "R" word was "Repent", and we talked about how the word repentance is from the Greek word *metanoia*, and it literally means "a change of mind which results in a change of lifestyle."¹ We don't confess our sins to God because He doesn't know what they are, we confess our sins because we need to be honest with ourselves over what we are doing, thinking, or saying that is against God. More to the point of this series, we confess our sins because once something is named, it is exposed. And once something is exposed, it cannot have the same power over us it once did. Once that power is broken, the devil has lost his hold on us. Repentance following confession, that is, the literal turning away from the sin we named, keeps the devil from being able to worm his way back into our lives.

Our second "R" word from last week was "Renounce", and we talked about as the word renounce is used in the Bible, it is from the Greek word *arneomai*², and it means "to verbally renounce knowledge or relationship; to refuse to agree with; to not consent to." We said once we've confessed and repented to get the sin named, exposed, weakened, and turned away from, then we can renounce the lies the devil would use to keep us crippled and begging.

This week the "R" word in gaining victory over the devil is "Reclaim." When we've turned away from sin and been made new, when we've called upon the name of Jesus and renounced the lies the evil one would have us believe about ourselves, then we can reclaim what we've lost to him.

The word "reclaim" as it's used in the Bible is from the Hebrew word "qanah", and it means pretty much what you would think 'reclaim' means – to acquire, to get back,³ to obtain that which was once lost from us through our own actions or the actions of another.

So what have we lost and how have we lost it? We lost 'it', we lost ground to the devil because we didn't stay with God and in His Word. What we have lost is immeasurable.

We've lost ground of morality. Today there is no 'right' or 'wrong', but rather a sea of opinions, very often not based on God's unchangeable Word. We've lost connection with our families as

¹ Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament): 3567 *μετάνοια*

² Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament): 766 *ἀρνέομαι*

³ Enhanced Strong's Lexicon: 766 **קָנָה**

we've gotten so busy in our lives we've allowed that busy-ness to take us away from our wives and husbands and children and parents and brothers and sisters.

We've lost the ground of self-control as we've turned to this idea of "as long as it feels good, do it" and, "what happens in Vegas – or behind closed doors – stays in Vegas." We've lost the ground of powerful, prayerful witness to the lost as we've become shy and timid in sharing our faith – and we've lost that because so many don't know what they believe because they don't know what God's Word says. Show me someone with dust on their Bibles, and I'll show you someone starving to death spiritually whether they realize it or not.

And in the middle of all this, the devil sits on his throne in hell smiling and chuckling to himself because he's keeping us from living in the victory we have over him.

In 1991 the movie Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves was released starring Kevin Costner. In that movie there is a scene where Robin Hood is speaking to a group of people, getting them to realize they don't have to live the way they've been living anymore – hiding, afraid, worried. He tries to get them to understand they have all the weapons they need to defeat their enemy and reclaim what was taken from them. One of the people in the crowd shouts out, "But they've got our goods, our land!" And Costner's character looks back and simply says, "Then, by God, we take it back!"

We take it back, by God. We take it back through the power given us by the Holy Spirit. We take it back, we reclaim what has been lost through the power of Jesus' name. The same power that leads us to confession and repentance, and that same power we called on to renounce the lies we've been told. By God, we take it back, put the devil in his place, and live in the victory Jesus has won for us!

Sounds good, pastor! Amen, pastor ! Preach it! How do we do it?

We do it by first repenting and then renouncing. Then we do it by asking the question we asked just a minute ago, "Through the devil's gaining of a stronghold, what ground have I lost in my life?"

Men, where are you with your wives, and ladies, where are you with your husbands? It's time to reclaim those relationships.

Children, where are you with your parents, and parents where are you with your children? It's time to reclaim those relationships.

What have we been reading, watching, looking at on the internet, that has taken its toll on our relationships with one another and with our Savior? Time to repent of them, renounce them, and reclaim that which we have lost when we were wallowing in them.

And we do it in Jesus' name.

In our reading from Acts this morning in verse 10 it says it clearly: “... *know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.*”

That which was taken away from the crippled man was reclaimed through the power of the name of Jesus. That which has been taken away from you and me can also be reclaimed by the power of the name of Jesus.

Is it always going to be easy? Not necessarily. It’s one thing to talk about repenting, renouncing and reclaiming; it’s another thing to actually do it.

Is it always going to be a fast recovery? Again, no. We didn’t lose what we lost overnight; we aren’t going to get it all back right away either.

Is it worth it? Oh yes! Just ask the man in our reading who spent his life begging for scraps and coins who is now dancing and jumping and running for the first time.

Just ask the marriage that was made stronger; the relationship between parent and child that was healed; the family that came together stronger than they ever were before when the enemy had occupied territory in their unit.

Just ask the person who was once lost, but is now found; was once blind to the truth, but can now see the truth, because someone reached out to them to reclaim one of God’s lost children by the power of the Holy Spirit given them.

Reclaim – to take back that which was once ours that was lost to the devil either through our own actions or lack of actions. To live in the victory Jesus would have for us.

It starts with the self. It starts in the home.

It may start with an apology and asking forgiveness from the ones closest to us who were abandoned when we lost the ground we are now reclaiming.

It may mean some radical changes in our lives as we give up those things we’ve been clinging to in order to free ourselves to reclaim that which we have lost.

It *will* mean turning to, and relying on Jesus; asking for strength and wisdom from the Holy Spirit, and giving ourselves completely over to Him and staying in the Word so we can reclaim what we’ve lost through the power of the Holy Spirit

It means the death to self, and the rising to life in Christ. Paul put it this way in Galatians 2:20, *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

Will you pray with me, please?

Lord Jesus, lead us to repent, lead us to renounce, and lead us to reclaim that which we let the enemy take. Forgive us for the times we've not stood firm in Your truth and instead turned to self-opinions. Forgive us for the times we've turned to what was quick and easy rather than staying with what was right according to Your Word. Forgive us for losing the ground You gave us to our enemy.

By the power in Your name, Jesus, we want to take it back. You know better than we do what we have lost. Open our eyes to see the truth of what we've surrendered to the enemy, and then open our hearts, our minds and our lips to speak Your name and reclaim them.

Work in us, Holy Spirit, to know the truth and be set free by it. Set free to live in the victory Jesus purchased for us when He uttered from the cross – tetelastai: it is finished; paid in full.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.